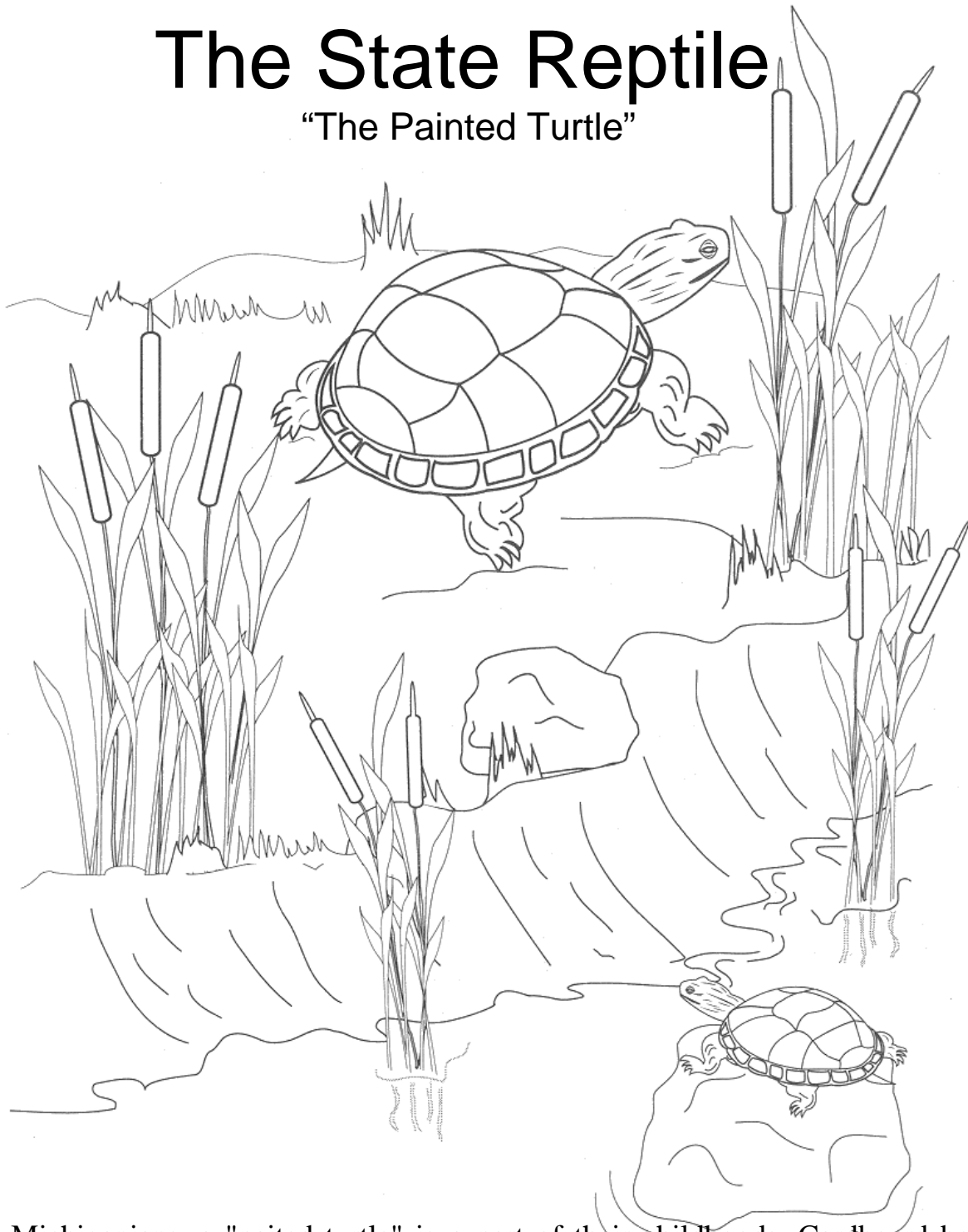


The State Reptile

"The Painted Turtle"



For many Michiganders, a "painted turtle" is a part of their childhoods. Cardboard boxes, old aquariums, tin pails, quart jars, and many other containers have been home to this favorite reptile. In 1995, the Michigan Legislature formally adopted the *Chrysemys picta*, or "painted turtle," as Michigan's State Reptile when they passed House Bill 4948. The painted turtle is found throughout the entire state of Michigan. It ranges in length from as small as four inches long to as large as ten inches. It has distinctive yellow and red markings on its head, limbs and shell. Normally, it lives in shallow water and eats pond vegetation, insects, crayfish and mollusks, including the zebra mussel. During the cold winter months, it buries itself in the mud and hibernates. The painted turtle is gentle and easy to handle.